

crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would strengthen and add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On the night of February 22, 2008, 17-year-old Simmie Lewis Williams, Jr., was gunned down in his hometown of Fort Lauderdale, FL. The shooting occurred on a stretch of road known by police to be frequented by transvestites. Simmie, openly gay, had been dressed as a woman the night of his murder. He was known for being soft-spoken and kind. Witnesses say that Simmie became engaged in a heated argument with two men dressed in dark clothing before the shots were fired. Simmie's mother buried her son a week later. The funeral was, in part, paid for by members of the local gay community. Police are considering the murder as a bias-motivated crime.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. Federal laws intended to protect individuals from heinous and violent crimes motivated by hate are woefully inadequate. This legislation would better equip the Government to fulfill its most important obligation by protecting new groups of people as well as better protecting citizens already covered under deficient laws. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING JOSHUA KORS

• Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate Joshua Kors on winning the George Polk Award for magazine reporting and his selection as a finalist for Harvard's Goldsmith Prize for Investigative Reporting.

I am grateful for the work Mr. Kors has done on behalf of our troops and for the leadership he has demonstrated in his relentless pursuit of the facts.

America counts on its investigative reporters to expose corruption, mismanagement and abuse, particularly in government. Mr. Kors' work brought to light the military's appalling misuse of administrative discharges for many of our combat-wounded soldiers.

Mr. Kors' profile of the difficulties SPC Jon Town encountered after returning from Iraq showed all of us in troubling detail the devastating impact of the Pentagon's policy on one soldier and his family—a story which is repeated in the lives of too many others similarly discharged.

With the lives and livelihoods of these wounded warriors on the line, Mr. Kors' reporting has clearly made a difference already.

It is now up to Congress to ensure that the Department of Defense treats our soldiers fairly. Our troops have courageously put themselves in harm's way and it is incumbent upon our government to ensure that they receive the best possible care when they return.

Many of us on Capitol Hill have pledged to continue to fight to eliminate the misuse of personality discharges through all legislative and administrative means at our disposal.

I thank Mr. Kors for his outstanding work and congratulate him on his accomplishments.●

HONORING KELLY BUCKLAND

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, our outlook on life and the effect we have on others is largely dependent upon how we respond to our life experiences. We can choose to make a difference in our world, or sit back and let others blaze trails. As I get older, I am more and more convinced that these choices have little to do with our physical capabilities or the circumstances of our upbringing. I meet people who have overcome seemingly monumental challenges and live to make a difference in the lives of others. In the same manner, I meet those with observably few challenges who are content to sit on the sidelines. A most remarkable example of someone who has responded to the circumstances and events in his life by choosing to make a difference in the lives of others is Idahoan Kelly Buckland, president of the National Council for Independent Living and an extraordinary advocate for people with disabilities.

Kelly grew up on a farm outside of Rexburg, ID. When he was 15, he became a quadriplegic as a result of a diving accident. Kelly has recalled that, upon returning home after a year of hospitalization, he became deeply depressed. But with the encouragement of his parents who, among other things, rigged up farm equipment so that Kelly could continue doing what he had done before the accident, Kelly began to recover from his depression. Recalling the people that helped him and others during his hospitalization, Kelly made a choice that would change his life and the lives of many others over the years: he chose to use his many gifts and talents to help those in need.

Kelly obtained a bachelor's degree in social work from Boise State University. He graduated summa cum laude with a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling from Drake University. He was exposed to the legislative process early in his career and realized that he had an interest and a gift for public policy. In the 1980s, Kelly was instrumental in the initial effort to install curb cuts in the city sidewalks in Burley, ID, to help with wheelchair accessibility. Kelly's advocacy then turned to the State, where he was able to help change Idaho State law to provide pro-

tections for parents with disabilities. Idaho State law now prohibits the removal of a child from a home or the denial of visitations solely because of a parent's disability. Idaho was the first State in the Nation to pass equal child custody rights for parents with disabilities in all areas of child custody.

As the executive director of the Idaho State Independent Living Council, Kelly made it his priority to fight for equal rights and equal protection under the law for those with disabilities, especially in areas of fair housing and healthcare. His outreach and advocacy has gone beyond just the State level as well—Kelly has testified before Congress on issues facing individuals with disabilities in his capacity as president of the National Independent Living Council.

Kelly has received several local and national awards. In 2000, he received the University of Idaho's President's Medallion. Kelly was honored with the 2005 Hewlett-Packard Company Award for Distinguished Leadership in Human Rights and, in 2007, Kelly was honored at the Kennedy Center with induction into the Spinal Cord Injury Hall of Fame for significant contributions to quality of life and advancements toward a better future for all individuals with spinal cord injury or disease.

One of Kelly's profound strengths is unique ability to perceive and appreciate the position of others, and to help others understand his point of view in a respectful, honest manner. He is highly skilled at helping those who may perceive themselves in opposition to one another reach a place where they can meet and find a common middle ground. Despite his many accomplishments, Kelly is exceedingly humble, preferring to give credit to others for many of the successes in which he's been instrumental. He has observed that we all have something we perceive as a hindrance to our own success, but it is our responsibility to acknowledge perceived limitations and move forward rather than devote time and energy in focusing on what we think our particular limitations prevent us from doing.

Kelly has devoted his time and energy to ensuring that those who have experienced legal, occupational and personal difficulties as a result of their disabilities have a voice in changing our laws to ensure true independence for all. His own words echo his convictions: "I want to insure that no one need be institutionalized because there are inadequate community services. I want freedom to be a reality for everyone."

Kelly Buckland is a voice of compassion, inspiration and reason and it is my distinct honor to recognize him today.●

RECOGNIZING VICTORIA WILLIAMS

• Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I would like to take this time to recognize and congratulate Ms. Victoria Williams of